

A Study On Life Skills Among Adolescents In Selected Government Schools - Paramount Importance For Psychosocial Intervention

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ABSTRACT

Life skills are psychosocial abilities which fosters personal and social development. Promoting Life skills helps equip young people to face the demands and challenges everyday, and to adapt with changing circumstances effectively. Adolescence is the transitional phase from childhood to adulthood, the phase of storm and stress and the search for self or identity, but succumb to peer pressure, substance abuse and highrisk behaviors. Life skills serves as an efficacious tool for the adolescents to act responsibly and take control of their emotions and behaviour. The present study was done to assess the level of Life skills among adolescents in selected Government schools at south chennai. This is a Univariate, cross sectional, Expost facto research. The study involved 888 adolescents(428 boys and 460 girls), studying in grade 8 and 9, aged 13 to 15 years from five Government schools, selected through stratified random sampling technique. Standardised Life skills assessment scale (LSAS) by Subasree and Radhakrishnan (2014) with 100 items was used for data collection. Results showed that 97.16% of adolescents in the study possessed very low, low and average Life skills. 2.8% of adolescents in the study had high life skills and NONE of them had very high life skills, t test analysis showed that boys had low Life skills than girls ($p < 0.01$). The implication of the study emphasizes a strong need for counseling and psychosocial intervention for adolescents at school level.

KEY WORDS: Life skills, Adolescents.

Introduction

“Life skills are psychosocial skills which fosters personal and social development. Promoting Life skills helps equip young people to face the demands and challenges everyday, and to adapt with changing circumstances effectively. Lack of guidance and insufficient intervention results in poor personal development” (Pajares and Urdan, 2004)

Adolescence is the transitional phase from childhood to adulthood, characterized by fast physiological changes and psychosocial maturation. WHO defines adolescence age as 10 to 19

years. Adolescence is marked as the turning point in one's life, characterized as a period of increased potential but also cautioned as the phase of greater vulnerability. A number of factors aggravates normal functioning of adolescents disrupting their well being leading to maladjustment and emotional disturbances(Report by UNICEF 2012).

The key issues and concerns of adolescents include developing an identity, having frequent mood changes and very often unable to understand the emotional turmoil, need for social skills to define boundaries in every relationship, difficulty to resist peer pressure, aggressive and irresponsible behaviour (Life skills education and CCE). The adolescents with personal, cognitive and social deficits are vulnerable to bullying, violence, socio-economic and environmental challenges (Nasheeda 2018). The problems faced by adolescents are called conduct or behavioural problems leading to poor academic performance (Hakelind 2007).

Life skills serves as an efficacious tool for the adolescents to evolve into active and productive members of their communities and for their well being to act responsibly and take control of their emotions and behaviour to make the most out of life.

Objectives

To assess the level of life skills on high school students.

To study the level of life skills with respect to demographic variables.

Hypothesis

1. There will be no significant difference in life skills with respect to gender among adolescent high school students.
2. There will be no significant difference in life skills with respect to demographic variables among adolescent high school students.

Methodology

This is a cross-sectional, univariate, ex post facto research study conducted among adolescents. The sample consisted of 888 school adolescents (Boys-428, Girls-460), selected from five Government schools in South Chennai, studying in 8th and 9th standard, in English and Tamil medium, with age 13 to 15 years.

Instruments used

Life skills Assessment Scale (LSAS) by Subasree & Radhakrishnan Nair (2014) was used to measure Life skills. This self-report scale consists of 100 items, measuring Life skills on a five point Likert scale which ranges from 'Always true of me' to 'Not at all true of me', with scores ranging from 5 to 1. Items

1,5,9,10,14,18,19,28,30,31,35,38,45,47,48,51,52,54,56,58,60,61,63,64, 67, 70, 72, 73, 75, 76, 79, 88, 94, 95, 97, 100 are reverse scored. Test-retest reliability for the scale is 0.91. Internal consistency (cronbach's alpha) of the scale is 0.84. The demographic questionnaire with the details such as gender, birth order, type of family, educational qualification of father, educational qualification of mother, type of parenting alcoholism of father was administered along with LSAS for the study. The questionnaire was explained in detail and queries related to confidentiality of information during assessment was assured. Life skills assessment scale was administered to collect data.

The schools chosen for study were Five Government schools at Chennai. A formal letter was addressed to the Chief Educational Officer to seek consent for conducting study. After approval, the respective higher authorities of the five schools were met to clarify the purpose and nature of study. Consent was also sought from the participants.

Statistical Analysis

Independent t-test, and one way ANOVA were calculated to find there was any significant difference in Life skills with respect to gender and other demographic variables.

Results

Table 1

Demographic characteristics of sample

Demographic variable	Groups	(N=243)	Percentage
Gender	Boys	428	48.2
	Girls	460	51.8
Father's Education	Illiterate	353	39.8
	High school	426	48.0
	Higher secondary	86	9.7
	Degree	23	2.6
	Total	888	100.0
Mother's Education	Illiterate	336	37.8
	High school	474	53.4
	Higher secondary	65	7.3
	Degree	13	1.5
	Total	888	100.0
Family Type	Nuclear	654	73.6
	Joint	234	26.4
	Total		100.0
Birth Order	First Born	473	53.3

	Second Born	303	34.1
	Third Born	70	7.9
	Others	42	4.7
			100.0
Single/ Dual Parent	Single	138	15.5
	Dual	750	84.5
	Total	888	100.0
Alcoholism of Father	Alcoholic	358	40.3
	Non-Alcoholic	530	59.7
	Total	888	100.0

Table 2

Difference in Life skills with respect to Gender

Variable	Groups	N=888	Mean	SD	t	p	Sig
Gender	Boys	428	325.38	25.612	5.310	.000	0.01
	Girls	460	334.69	26.553			

The results of t-test from Table 2, shows that there is significant difference in Life skills with respect to gender.

Table 3

Difference in Life skills with respect to Family type, Single/Dual parenting, Alcoholism of Father

Variable	Groups	N=888	Mean	SD	t	p	Sig
Family Type	Nuclear	654	331.11	26.880	1.713	.087	NS
	Joint	234	327.66	25.293			
Single/Dual parenting	Single	138	328.57	26.614	0.790	.430	NS
	Dual	750	330.50	26.486			
Alcoholism of Father	Alcoholic	358	328.21	24.235	1.847	.065	NS
	Non-Alcoholic	530	331.55	27.869			

The results of t-test from Table 3 shows that there is no significant difference in Life skills with respect to family type, single/dual parenting and alcoholism of father.

Table 4**Mean and Standard deviation of groups with respect to Birth order, Father's Education and Mother's Education.**

Variable	Groups	Mean	N	SD
Birth Order	I Born	331.81	473	26.974
	II Born	329.92	303	26.402
	III Bom	321.93	70	24.595
	Others	327.88	42	22.616
	Total	330.20	888	26.501
Father's Education	Illiterate	328.98	353	26.360
	High-s	330.56	426	25.646
	Higher sec	330.12	86	30.266
	Degree	342.70	23	27.607
	Total	330.20	888	26.501
Mother's Education	Illiterate	327.80	336	25.180
	High-s	331.19	474	26.838
	Higher sec	330.89	65	28.103
	Degree	352.69	13	29.273
	Total	330.20	888	26.501

Table 5

Variable	Groups	N	Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	Sig
Father's Education	Illiterate	353	Between group	4175.075	3	1391.692	1.988	.114	NS
	High -s	426							
	H-sec	86	Within groups	618750.439	884	699.944			
	Degree	23							
	Total	888	Total	622925.514	887				
Mother's Education	Illiterate	336	Between groups	9003.933	3	3001.311	4.322	.005	0.01
	High-s	474							
	H-sec	65	Within groups	613921.581	884	694.481			
	Degree	13							
	Total	888	Total	622925.514	887				
Birth order	I Born	473	Between groups	6266.958	3	2088.986	2.995	.030	0.05
	II Born	303							
	III Bom	70	Within groups	616658.555	884	697.578			
	Others	42							
	Total	888	Total	622925.514	887				

The results of ANOVA from Table 5 shows no significant difference in Life skills with respect to Father's Education, but there exists significance difference with respect to Mother's Education and birth order.

Discussion

The present study showed significant difference in Life skills with respect to gender, which is in line with the study done by Dr.K. Anuradha (2014), M Kaur (2014) affirming that girls have better life skills than boys. The significant difference in Life skills with respect to mother's education is in line with Choudhary and Gulati (2015) which affirms that children of graduate

parents possessed better life skills than non graduate parents and mothers with matriculate education or less perceived more stress.

It is interesting to know from the study that life skills decreased from Birth order 1 through Birth order 3 and Birth order 1 had highest scores on life skills, the reason could be that first born child gets complete attention from parents and family, so as they grow in an environment enriched by adults, they acquire life skills easily, compared to second or third birth order compared to Birth order 2 and 1, who acquire learning from the elder sibling as well as from others in family.

Alcoholism of father had no significant difference on life skills which is contrary to the findings of Prijina and Godwin (2015), which states that alcoholism of father affected academic achievement of the adolescents and that life skills and academic achievement are inter-related and inter-dependent. Life skills did not have significant difference on the type of family, single or dual parenting and father's education. The findings indicate that educated mothers had more concern over their children which led to better life skills.

Life skills education increases academic achievement and academic motivation (Ankit patel, 2014), adjustment, self-confidence (Choudhary and Gulati, 2015), Psychological well-being (vijendra kumar and krishnamurthy 2016), autonomy (Ghasemian and kumar 2017), self-esteem (Abdul Azeez, 2015), pro social behavior, mental health (Savoji and Ganji, 2013). Research studies suggests that the life skills approach increases social, cognitive, emotional and behavioral competencies which are effective in reducing negative or dangerous behaviors. (Abbasi P, Timareh M, Ziapour A, Dehghan F, Yazdani V. 2018). It acts as a shield to external pressures and a preventive measure for problems faced by adolescents. It helps to inculcate adaptive behaviors, overcome stress and cope with emotions increasing self awareness, which forms the basis for a strong and positive personal development. This inturn helps one blossom into on's personal and professional life in the near future and helps pave way for personal success and work place well being.

Conclusion

The present study assesses life skills among high school adolescents and the level of life skills with respect to demographic variables.

The study shows that there is significant difference in Life skills with respect to gender.

The study shows that there is no significant difference in Life skills with respect to family type, single/dual parenting and alcoholism of father.

The study shows there is no significant difference in Life skills with respect to Father's Education, but there exists significance difference with respect to Mother's Education and birth order.

It is evident that life skills serves as a life cover through out one's life if administered at appropriate age. There is a strong recommendation for psychological counseling and intervention at school level to impart life skills training as a need based skill training. The results are alarming that there are only few adolescents with high life skills and none of them have high life skills.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The effectiveness of Integrated Psychological Intervention emphasizes the importance of incorporating Life skills along with the academic curriculum.

Adolescents need Life skills and Government school student's need for Life skills, is a critical concern, owing to the number of Government schools and children living in poverty.

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